

Amendments to the Specification:

The following paragraph should replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 1:

The coupling 16 contains a cylindrical housing or body 18 formed of the same material as the tubes 12b, 14b of the conduits 12, 14. The coupling body 18 has an outer [[diameter]] surface, indicated at 40 in FIGS. 3-4, having a diameter that is slightly less than the inner diameter 12j, 14j of the conduit tubes 12b, 14b. The coupling body 18 further has an inner diameter that varies to form a taper 36 at each end of the body, as shown in FIG. 4. The body 18 further contains a circumferential recess 44 intermediate the ends 20, 22 of the body, and a ring 28 formed of the same material as the tubes 12b, 14b of the conduits 12, 14. The ring 28 is positioned within the recess 44 of the body and has a circumferential stop means, such as a plurality of circumferentially-spaced spacer pins 30, for limiting movement of the ends 20, 22 of the coupling body 18 within the respective ends 12z, 14z of the conduits 12, 14 by the ends of the conduits abutting the stop means 30. A thermal insulator 54 is preferably positioned in the recess between the ring 28 and the body 18 for inhibiting the transfer of heat produced by welding the ends of the conduits together, and at least one circumferential seal 50 – and preferably a second circumferential seal 52 – is positioned intermediate the recess 44 and each of the tapered ends 20, 22 of the body 18 for sealing the interconnected conduits 12, 14.